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Chairman: Mr. Wolfe ..... (Jamaica)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 66: Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*) (A/62/297 and 319; A/C.3/62/2)

(a) Promotion and protection of the rights of children (*continued*) (A/62/182 and 209; A/62/228)

(b) Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children (*continued*) (A/62/259)

Dialogue with Mr. Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro (independent expert for the United Nations in-depth study on violence against children)

Continuation and conclusion of general discussion

1. **Mr. Ramadan** (Lebanon) said that in 2007 Lebanon had identified preventing and addressing violence against children as one of Lebanon's national planning priorities. Some of the legal reforms undertaken with regard to violence against children had been comprehensive, while other reforms had focused on specific forms of violence or related sectors, such as juvenile justice. Other efforts included extensive Government and non-governmental organization (NGO)-led awareness-raising campaigns designed to promote non-violent and human rights values. The collection and analysis of data on children had been improved, and access to the legal framework in accordance with international human rights norms and standards relating to children had been enhanced.

2. Lebanon supported the establishment of a special representative of the Secretary-General on violence against children but was unclear about whether violations against children in armed conflicts would come within the purview of that proposed office or that of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict. The issue of children in armed conflicts should be expressly included in the mandate of the new office or of another specific unit.

3. Lebanon's educated children were one of the country's main assets. The damage inflicted on the Lebanese educational sector by Israel during its 2006 war against his country amounted to approximately $70 million, and Lebanon's medical services had also suffered. Unexploded ordnance (UXO) represented a major risk to the lives of children in southern Lebanon; at least 124 persons had been killed or wounded in incidents involving unexploded bombs. Lingering psychological effects on children included disturbed sleeping patterns and loss of appetite and confidence. Lebanon looked forward to a day when children in Lebanon, Palestine and Israel could live in peace and security.

4. **Ms. Mwaffisi** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that her country's national development programmes and its poverty reduction strategy addressed children's issues and provided for key outcomes that reflected the Millennium Development Goals which focused on children. Her Government had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols and was currently drawing up a children's act reflecting the country's obligations under those instruments.

5. A national plan of action to combat violence against women and children had been communicated to the bodies concerned for implementation. Strict measures against sexual violence and abuse of women and children were taken under the Sexual Offences Special Provisions Act of 1998. The Act made female genital mutilation a crime, and a specific national plan to combat that practice provided guidance on its eradication. The number of highly vulnerable children, including orphans, street children, child labourers, sexually exploited children, children with disabilities and child victims of trafficking, was estimated at about 2.5 million and was increasing rapidly.

6. The Government assisted communities in taking care of orphans and unprotected children and had formulated an action plan and cost estimate for providing the most vulnerable children with household care, education and health services. The national commission for human rights and good governance ran a desk for women and children, conducted public hearings on violence and abuse and had made effective recommendations to the Government for improving the enjoyment of children's rights. The communities' inadequate awareness of the rights of children and of appropriate remedies for violations of those rights was a challenge. The Government was currently reviewing the child development policy drawn up in 1996 to encourage community, family and child participation in formulating policies systematically to prevent violence against children.

7. Initiatives undertaken by Tanzania in line with "A world fit for children" included activities aimed at promoting health, providing quality education,

combating HIV/AIDS, protecting children from abuse, exploitation and violence, addressing the needs of vulnerable children and ensuring that children and young people participated in developing those activities. Substantial progress had been made in reducing the under-five and infant mortality rates. In Zanzibar, maternal mortality had declined slightly, and the number of births occurring in health facilities and attended by trained health personnel had increased. Significant progress had been achieved towards universal primary education, inter alia through the abolition of school fees. A scheme for complementary education provided basic education opportunities to children not attending school, motivating them to enrol.

8. Remaining challenges included children's deaths from preventable illnesses; the quality of health services, which suffered from insufficient human resources and medical equipment; the lack of access to safe water and sanitation, especially in rural areas; the inadequate quality of education; the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS; and the condition of refugee children. While the Government of Tanzania had the primary responsibility for promoting the rights of children, international cooperation was a necessary supplement to national efforts. Debt cancellation would free resources for the social sectors, including efforts to improve children's well-being.

9. **Ms. Tchitanava** (Georgia) said that Georgia's performance in the area of health care had improved since 2000 but remained low by European standards. Joint efforts by the Government of Georgia and the relevant United Nations agencies were aimed at improving infant and maternal care, preventing HIV/AIDS, reducing the under-five and infant mortality rates, eliminating malnutrition and raising the level of education. The rate of immunization against the most common diseases had attained 80 per cent, exceeding 90 per cent in the case of tuberculosis. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and its partner organizations delivered vaccines, surgical supplies, essential drugs, vitamins, cold-chain equipment, water-purification systems and educational material to the conflict zones. Various international bodies provided valuable training and assistance.

10. In 2006, the Georgian Parliament had adopted legislation making domestic violence a criminal offence. A plan for reducing the number of institutionalized children had been approved. The Netherlands and UNICEF had recently signed a three-year cooperation-agreement to assist Georgia in reforming its juvenile justice system in accordance with international instruments.

11. Although the Government of Georgia, in cooperation with international donors, made every effort to support refugee and internally displaced children and children living in the conflict zones, most of those children were out of reach. Georgian children in Abkhazia were deprived of their fundamental right to study in their mother tongue. The radical separatist regime prohibited Georgian as a language of instruction in the Gali region, mostly populated by Georgians. The study of Georgian literature, history, geography and other subjects was restricted. It was regrettable that a United Nations agency working in the conflict area had provided special funding to schools where Georgian children were forced to be educated in the Russian language. In conclusion, she said the valuable work carried out by the United Nations in the conflict zones should be complemented with greater involvement in rehabilitation and reconciliation processes.

12. **Ms. Mladineo** (Croatia) said that, despite such achievements as reduction of the under-five and infant mortality rates and of the total number of deaths from measles, many children still died from vaccine-preventable diseases, had no access to adequate sanitation and did not attend school. Every day, millions of children were tortured, raped, beaten, forced to work and compelled to participate in armed conflicts. In many countries, the Government failed to protect families, which in turn failed to protect their children.

13. Having experienced the horrors of war, Croatia supported international initiatives to combat the recruitment of child soldiers. Much progress had been made with regard to demobilization and reintegration programmes for children, but more resources were needed. Education was the key to the reintegration of the children concerned. Croatia adhered to the Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups ("Paris Principles"). Under Croatian law, corporal punishment was illegal in schools and childcare institutions. The Croatian Government cooperated with UNICEF on special programmes aimed at protecting children from violence.

14. **Mr. Al-Saif** (Kuwait) said that his country had implemented many programmes for children and had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two Optional Protocols, as well as the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (C182). He shared the independent expert's view that reactive and fragmented efforts, focusing narrowly on symptoms and consequences of violence, would not yield long-term success. In particular, he wondered how such efforts could succeed in Lebanon and Palestine in the face of the large child death toll from Israel's 2006 war on Lebanon, the inhumane separation barrier in Palestine and the detention of Palestinian children for even the most minor offences. All should take heed of the comment made by one of the children met by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, to the effect that the United Nations was all talk and no action.

15. **Ms. Katabarwa** (Uganda) said that in northern Uganda a considerable number of Ugandan children who had been forcibly conscripted by the so-called Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) had been rescued by the Ugandan forces and were being reintegrated into society. Uganda had ratified, inter alia, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols and the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment; and had participated in the "Free Children from War" international conference held in Paris in February 2007. Current Ugandan legislation prohibited the recruitment of persons under 18 into the Uganda People's Defence Forces or the local defence units. As a result of the Juba peace talks, the local defence units had been disbanded, and those of their members who qualified had been integrated into the regular army and resettled in their home areas. Children who had escaped from LRA or had been rescued by UPDF had been rehabilitated and re-integrated into society with NGO, civil-society and faith-based community assistance.

16. Rape was a capital offence punishable by death in civilian and military courts. Soldiers found guilty for that crime had been executed. However, some cases were difficult to prosecute as a result of inadequate institutional capacity and cultural inhibitions on the part of victims. In view of the abuse to which children held by LRA were subjected, the International Criminal Court had issued arrest warrants against top LRA commanders. Uganda called on the United Nations and the international community to compel LRA immediately to release children who were still being held more than a year after the Juba peace talks.

17. The Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda had signed an agreement to rid their territories of rebel elements that destabilized both States. With the support of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and other regional actors, Uganda should be able to re-establish peace and to focus on poverty eradication and development. Post-conflict reconstruction and recovery in northern Uganda, including the Karamajong regibn, was a priority item in the 2007/08 national budget. It was expected that the resettlement of internally displaced persons would be completed in 2008. The Government planned to support productive activities in northern Uganda by streamlining the implementation of the Northern Uganda peace, recovery and development plan and other concurrent initiatives. Resettlement efforts had been hampered by exceptionally abundant rainfall and floods, which the United Nations and donors had helped Uganda to address.

18. **Ms. Itoua-Apoyolo** (Congo) said that, having ratified the African Common Position on the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 2006, her Government was making concrete efforts to achieve the main goals of the Convention. Legal and institutional frameworks had been created for the national health policy. In education, new curricula were being introduced, including such subjects as sex education and peace studies, to promote children's rights and equity. In the area of social protection, a framework for strategic action was being established to strengthen prevention, care and rehabilitation for orphans and disabled children.

19. With the help of international development agencies, her Government had rebuilt school and health-care facilities that had been destroyed by successive wars. The overall situation of children was therefore improving in the Congo, with better access to health care and higher education rates. The rights and well-being of children were being integrated into the poverty reduction strategy document that was currently being finalized. The Congo's participation in the heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) initiative would make more resources available for development

programmes that benefited children. In addition, mechanisms such as a children's parliament had been put in place that allowed children to express their views and participate in decision-making.

20. **Ms. Arditi di Castelvetere Manzo** (Observer for the Sovereign Military Order of Malta) said that through its Holy Family Hospital in Bethlehem, the Order of Malta provided for one of the most basic rights of children: to be born in a safe environment. The hospital delivered 60 per cent of all babies born in the district, including many born to mothers who were refugees.

21. While overall progress on the goals of protecting children from the impact of HIV/AIDS had been mixed, the Order was expanding its programmes on prevention of mother-child transmission in Argentina, Mexico, South Africa, Cambodia and other countries. It was estimated that nearly $30 billion would be needed by the end of the decade to respond to the needs of children infected by HIV. She urged Member States and organizations to act swiftly on the Secretary-General's recommendations in that regard.

22. The emphasis on obstetric fistula in the report of the Secretary-General on the girl child (A/62/297) was important because that condition was entirely preventable. In 2007, the Order of Malta had supported the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) campaign to end fistula in Darfur, and it hoped to see even greater support for the campaign in the future.

23. To counter persisting gender disparities in education, the Order was opening a secondary school for girls in Rumbek, Sudan. The project included construction of school buildings equipped with modern information technology and long-term support that would enable at least 100 girls to be enrolled each year.

24. To help address the acute vulnerability of children in armed conflict, the Order of Malta assisted people with basic practical needs, psychological help and support as they rebuilt their lives. In Lebanon, it had launched an appeal to provide vital supplies for 7,000 displaced children, including 700 babies born during the conflict. In the Congo, where more than 4 million people had already died in civil war, the Order ensured psychological care for young rape victims, and in the longer term, provided the necessary supplies for them to start their own small businesses.

25. The Order's work with the disabled in Europe and the United States was well known, while its work in developing countries, which had no institutions for the disabled, was most important. At institutions in Ecuador, the lives of hundreds of disabled children were being improved each year.

26. **Ms. Filip** (Observer for the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)) commended the independent expert and his team for their work on the study on violence against children (A/61/299). IPU and UNICEF had produced a concise, targeted handbook that set out the major recommendations of the study and highlighted what parliamentarians could do to prevent and end violence against children. The handbook had been launched at the IPU Assembly held in May 2007, at which a parliamentary panel had focused on violence against children at school. At the national level, the handbook had already been produced in French, Korean and Nepalese and would shortly be released in Arabic, Bahasa and Russian.

27. Members of Parliament in Australia were working with UNICEF on providing legal aid to victims of violence against children. IPU and UNICEF would shortly be briefing the United States Congress, together with members of parliament from around the world, on violence against girls, with a focus on sexual abuse and exploitation.

28. The independent expert had recently told the Third Committee that children were tired of words and no action, and wanted to enjoy their childhood free from violence. IPU was committed to pursuing that end, together with UNICEF and other partners.

29. **Ms. Amin** (Ethiopia) said that her Government was harmonizing national legislation with the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The new Penal Code provided for prison terms of 5 to 20 years for the crimes of child abduction, female circumcision and genital mutilation, rape, trafficking and early marriage. The Family Code had also been revised to change the minimum age for marriage from 15 to 18 years for both girls and boys and to guarantee the right to succession for biological and adopted children alike.

30. The establishment of a social welfare policy and new guidelines was improving the well-being of children in the areas of health care, education and protection services. The national five-year development plan, as well as the unprecedented growth her country had experienced in the previous four years,

would bolster her Government's efforts to overcome challenges and implement its plan of action for the World Summit on Children for the following decade.

31. Work was already under way to strengthen health-care systems and infrastructure. The nutritional status of children had improved significantly over the previous five years, with reductions in the percentages of stunted and underweight children as well as in under-five mortality.

32. In education, per capita spending had more than doubled between 2001/02 and 2004/05. As a result, the enrolment rate had risen and the repetition and dropout rates had fallen.

33. The key to reducing child labour was to eradicate poverty, while social protection would improve children's working environment. Coordinated action on such protection was ensured by national plans of action on orphans and vulnerable children and on sexual abuse and exploitation of children.

34. Despite encouraging results achieved over the previous five years, much remained to be done to fulfil the goals of "A world fit for children" and the Millennium Development Goals. The delivery of standard health services to all was hampered by a lack of skilled staff and an inefficient health referral system, compounded by poor access to and utilization of maternity services. Her Government could not deal with those problems on its own with limited resources. The full cooperation of the international community and enhanced development assistance were paramount if Ethiopia was to maintain the encouraging efforts under way.

35. **Mr. Dorji** (Bhutan) said that the laws had been amended in Bhutan to bridge gaps and harmonize legislation with the principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The draft Constitution provided for the protection of children against all forms of discrimination and exploitation. His Government had also established a National Commission for Women and Children.

36. Free basic education was designated an inalienable right in policy documents and the draft Constitution, and the education sector ranked high in the national budget. Universal primary education would be achieved by 2015. Efforts were being made to address concerns about the quality of education.

37. Health was another priority area in the national budget. Infant mortality rates had declined substantially, and Bhutan was on track to reduce the under-five mortality rate by two thirds by 2015. Parents were receiving education on such issues as nutrition, sanitation and positive childcare practices. Some 90 per cent of the population had access to basic health; the aim was to achieve universal coverage.

38. Together with NGOs, the Government had undertaken training to make teachers aware of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and to propose alternative teaching, learning and disciplining methods. Since 2005, the judiciary had been leading discussions of children's rights at teachers' conferences, a prelude to the formal introduction of the subject into the school curriculum.

39. Globalization and modernization were confronting Bhutan's natural environment, cultural heritage and social fabric with new challenges. Committees made up of representatives from various sectors had been established to address the increasing risks of HIV/AIDS and substance abuse, with a particular focus on adolescents and children. A new parenting education programme helped build awareness of those issues and encouraged more informed parental guidance for children. Law enforcement agencies continued to make procedures more child-friendly, and the police had established a women and child protection unit.

40. Services for disabled people and disabled children in particular, which had previously been seen as a health-care issue, were now being provided by diverse stakeholders and were improving thanks to resources from development partners. A key programme was community-based rehabilitation, in which family and community efforts were coordinated with Government services to care for children with disabilities. Strong family networks in Bhutan provided a safety net for those children and avoided costly and alienating institutional care.

41. Bhutan's progress in promoting and protecting children's rights had been achieved with the help of its many partners. Lack of resources was one of the challenges the country faced, and he hoped that the international community would continue to extend all necessary support.

42. **Mr. Belinga-Eboutou** (Cameroon) said that five years after the twenty-seventh special session of the

General Assembly on children, the situation of children remained precarious in many parts of the world, especially in Africa, owing to causes that included economic and social pressures, natural disasters, armed conflicts and humanitarian crises, exploitation of child labour and disease, hunger and illiteracy.

43. The Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international instruments stipulated that children must be given proper health care, education and protection from violence and must have input into decisions that concerned them. There should be no disparities between children in rich and in poor countries, between boys and girls or between children in urban and rural areas. His delegation appreciated the efforts by the many organizations within the United Nations system that had incorporated the noble goal of children's development into their programmes.

44. His Government had enacted a law against the trafficking of children and continued to work with the ILO and other countries in the region to combat child labour and cross-border trafficking of children. A law combating sexual tourism was also in place.

45. In other spheres, work was under way with the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF to reduce child mortality. Education was free of charge for all children, while incentives were provided to increase enrolment rates for girls among indigenous populations. Since 1996, children's parliaments involving children from varied social backgrounds had been convened, allowing them to engage with members of the Government on issues that concerned them.

46. Despite the strategies adopted, results were less than heartening. A recent evaluation of implementation in Africa had revealed that, although there had been some progress, achievements were not meeting expectations. In order to attain the goals of "A world fit for children", his delegation proposed the appointment of a special representative of the Secretary-General in charge of coordinating action on the promotion of children's well-being and rights.

47. The encyclical Populorum Progressio and the recent Stand Up Against Poverty events had underlined that the way to achieve peace and guarantee children's rights lay in tackling poverty. Commitments, particularly those aimed at poverty reduction, must be fulfilled in concrete form if the international community was ever to create a world fit for children.

48. **Ms. Johnson** (Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund) briefly summarized the background to the appointment of the independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children and the initial and current reports of the independent expert (A/61/299 and A/62/209, respectively). Speaking in her capacity as chairperson of the Inter-Agency Group on Violence against Children, she emphasized that the investment in the study thus far by so many organizations and partners had been significant and that expectations were high for fulfilling its recommendations.

49. She thanked the independent expert for his dedicated role in heightening awareness of the issue of violence against children and for his ability to reach out to partners at all levels, not least children and young people. It was now the responsibility of all the parties involved to work harder in order to change the realities of children's lives throughout the world.

50. **Mr. Pinheiro** (Independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children), introducing his report contained in document A/62/209, said that the study had generated many initiatives in all regions by Governments, civil society organizations and regional and international organizations. Although he was encouraged by the initial steps that had been taken, much more attention was required to the issues, particularly in such areas as violence in the home and family, schools and care and justice institutions, and it was essential to shift the focus from reaction to prevention.

51. The lack of reliable information in all regions of the world continued to be an obstacle to effective strategies to eradicate violence against children. The 12 overarching recommendations contained in his initial report must continue to guide initiatives to protect children from violence. All countries of the world should implement the recommendations in the study.

52. He reaffirmed his recommendation of the appointment of a special representative of the Secretary-General on violence against children. Only an individual in such a high-level, independent and full-time role would be in a position to call attention to all forms of violence against children and ensure coordination and communication among the various partners mobilized by the study. The time to act had come, and he expressed the hope that in one year's

time significant progress would have been made towards heeding the call by children for a world free from violence. No effort should be spared to ensure the implementation of all the recommendations in the study.

53. **Mr. Arguello** (Argentina) said that his delegation fully supported the independent expert's recommendation calling for the appointment of a special representative on violence against children. The appointee would be in a position to tackle the entire range of relevant issues, from its human rights aspects to its development components. Such an individual would also be ideally placed to increase cooperation, which was currently inadequate, between international and regional agencies involved in combating violence against children and would be able to address such violence in developed and developing countries alike.

54. The independent expert had stated that the time to act had come. Such words had been heard often, and he wished to know whether the situation with respect to violence against children was particularly urgent at the current time. The independent expert had referred to the need to move from reaction to prevention with respect to impunity. He asked what factors contributed to impunity and what were the most urgent measures that should be taken to combat it.

55. **Ms. de Albuquerque** (Portugal), speaking on behalf of the European Union, commended the independent expert for having raised awareness of the global problem of violence against children. According to the report (A/62/209), attitudes had improved at the national level in some countries regarding the importance of taking measures to eliminate and prevent violence against children. She asked for examples of such countries; whether there were any formulas for success or common elements that had facilitated those improved attitudes; and what the United Nations system, and the Third Committee in particular, could do to help eliminate violence against children. Although Governments had the primary responsibility for adopting measures to that end, private entities, civil society and NGOs had major roles to play as well, and she would welcome information about measures that had succeeded in encouraging those other players to take the lead in protecting children.

56. **Mr. Cheok** (Singapore) commended the independent expert for raising awareness of the problem of violence against children. Crimes against children in Singapore were rare, and legal protection for them was robust. His Government disagreed with the implication by the independent expert that corporal punishment in schools somehow represented violence against children. It had always held that the regulated use of corporal punishment was an acceptable mode of discipline, deterred acts of serious misbehaviour, fostered understanding of the consequences of certain actions and encouraged respect for the rights of other children. Corporal punishment was used only in isolated instances when other measures had failed, and safeguards and clear guidelines were in place to ensure that there was no abuse. Moreover, corporal punishment was not prohibited under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which his country was a signatory.

57. **Ms. Lowe** (New Zealand) said that her delegation agreed that effective action to end violence against children required strong leadership and coordinated action by the United Nations system. Approval of the independent expert's proposal to appoint a special representative on violence against children could cause overlapping with existing mandates, including those of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. Her delegation requested further clarification of how existing mandates related to children would be managed should agreement be reached to appoint a special representative.

58. **Mr. Rees** (United States of America) extended his Government's appreciation to the independent expert for continuing his path-breaking work on behalf of children. The United States had worked for years, together with other countries, to eliminate the scourge of violence against children, both at home and abroad, and would continue to do so. He cited United States Government statistics demonstrating his country's efforts to combat human trafficking, which often involved young children, and its investment in social programmes benefiting children.

59. His Government would carefully study the proposal to appoint a special representative on violence against children and looked forward to hearing the views of other Member States and concerned institutions on the subject and the independent expert's replies to the questions raised.

60. **Mr. Ramadan** (Lebanon) said that his delegation welcomed the findings and conclusions of the independent expert and endorsed the proposal to appoint a special representative on violence against children. His country was among those that had made the prevention of such violence a national priority and had taken action on the 12 overarching and specific recommendations contained in the study.

61. His delegation strongly believed that the situation of children in armed conflict should be an integral part of the mandate of the proposed special representative. The right to life was the most fundamental human right, and threats to that right were the ultimate form of violence against children.

62. **Mr. Jokinen** (Finland) expressed his delegation's appreciation for the independent expert's tireless efforts in carrying out his mandate. It fully agreed that the participation of civil society, and particularly children themselves, was crucial for implementing the 12 overarching recommendations and the setting-specific recommendations listed in document A/61/299. He wished to know whether the independent expert could provide examples of ways to ensure that children were directly involved in planning and implementing the study's recommendations at the national level.

63. **Mr. Saeed** (Sudan) said that the study by the independent expert was a remarkable achievement. His country was committed to studying the report and its recommendations and to translating them into action.

64. Discussions of the proposal to appoint a special representative on violence against children should take into account the recent outcome in the Human Rights Council and the ongoing debate on the system-wide coherence of the United Nations in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment. He urged Member States not to rush into taking a decision on the proposal. Furthermore, it was important to ensure that the mandate of the proposed special representative included the situation of children living under foreign occupation. The issue did not belong under the rubric of children and armed conflict.

65. **Ms. Sapag** (Chile) said that her delegation fully endorsed the proposal by the independent expert to appoint a special representative on violence against children and looked forward to discussing the proposed representative's mandate. It had taken note of the fact that certain types of violence against children, including violence in educational settings and violence related to new technologies, were increasing.

66. She wished to know which types of violence against children were on the rise in developed and developing countries alike and required forceful action by the United Nations and the proposed special representative.

67. **Mr. Ashiki** (Japan) said that his delegation welcomed the ongoing study of the independent expert and wished to convey its concern at the fact that violence against children in the family and at school was increasing. The expected role and mandate of the proposed special representative on violence against children were very broad and their priorities were not clear. He wished to know how the proposed special representative would be able to follow up such broad issues.

68. He would also appreciate the independent expert's comments on the possibility that the mandate of the proposed special representative might overlap with the mandates of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and United Nations agencies involved in protecting children, including the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Population Fund.

69. The urgent need further to promote the implementation of the independent expert's recommendations could be met by conducting a comprehensive review of relevant programmes and the existing mandates to which he had referred and by ensuring greater coordination among them.

70. **Ms. Khvan** (Russian Federation) requested further information about the Global Campaign for Violence Prevention referred to in the study, including when it had been launched, who were its main organizers and whether it had already yielded results. She would welcome details on the work of UNICEF and the WHO in improving international indicators of violence against children. Her delegation called on all interested parties to consider the issue of the possible establishment of new special procedures in a balanced and careful manner. Analysis of already existing mechanisms to prevent violence against children would help to further understanding of gaps in the activities of the Organization in that area and to define which

issues should be included in the mandate of any new special representative.

71. **Ms. Maierá** (Brazil) said that the appointment of a special representative would be helpful in implementing all the study's recommendations. She would like further elaboration on the need for regional cooperation in tackling violence against children. More details were needed on how a multidisciplinary approach by the international community and Governments to violence against children could be taken and what was necessary to make such an approach a reality.

72. **Ms. Halabi** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that her delegation was working towards the appointment of a special representative on violence against children. Her Government was concerned about the status of children under foreign occupation. Those children deserved the attention of the independent expert, especially as the mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict did not cover them.

73. **Mr. Belinga-Eboutou** (Cameroon) said that various aspects of violence were covered by Special Representatives, yet one form of violence, poverty, was not addressed by any of the special mechanisms. Violence was related to levels of development. Therefore, his delegation proposed the establishment of the post of a special representative who would promote development. There was no greater violence than depriving children of food, education, health care and, indeed, their parents.

74. **Ms. Nopakun-Phromyothi** (Thailand) said that her Government had consistently provided support for the work of the independent expert. The recommendations contained in his report would constitute an effective follow-up strategy at all levels. She would appreciate more information on the collaboration between NGOs and children and young persons mentioned in the report.

75. **Ms. Lund** (Norway) said that her Government was a strong supporter of the follow-up to the study on violence. Norway favoured a mandate for a special representative as a high-level independent voice to work for the elimination of all forms of violence against children.

76. **Mr. Abubaker** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that his delegation supported the establishment of a special representative on violence against children. The mandate of the special representative should include violence against children in armed conflict and under foreign occupation, as those children were subjected to the worst forms of violence. The eradication of poverty should also be a part of the mandate.

77. **Mr. Pinheiro** (Independent expert for the United Nations study on violence against children) said that it was difficult to establish a list of priorities among the 12 overarching recommendations put forward in the study. Nevertheless, a top priority was to ensure the provision of reliable data. The study did not make comparisons between States and regions because there was insufficient data to do so, and the relevant information did not exist to the same degree in all States. The prevention of violence was also a high priority. States must invest in preventive measures rather than use scarce resources to deal with the consequences of violence. Regarding the issue of impunity, it existed for a number of reasons, including the absence of information and the lack of awareness of the problem of violence against children. There was a high degree of acceptance of such violence. There was also a need for more reliable mechanisms for lodging complaints. The shortcomings in the juvenile justice system also helped to create a situation of impunity.

78. Change in attitudes could take place only over time. It was therefore necessary to have consistent and ongoing dialogue on the issue of violence against children. Such dialogue had underpinned the preparation of the study. He referred to the efforts to promote non-violent and human rights values described in the report. Governments had an obligation to create an environment conducive to dialogue. He had witnessed efforts by several Governments to work with local communities to change attitudes about such practices as female genital cutting or forced marriage. Legislation was also instrumental in promoting change. He noted with interest the legislation introduced in Egypt concerning traditional practices.

79. Consensus had been reached at the United Nations that violence against children must be prevented and addressed as a matter of priority. High-level attention to the problem must be maintained. The strong support and participation of United Nations agencies, particularly UNICEF, WHO and ILO, as well as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, were crucial for

implementing the recommendations of the study. The involvement of civil society organizations such as End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes and Child Helpline International was also fundamentally important.

80. There was no duplication between his mandate and that of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, because children and armed conflict was an issue which directly affected fewer than 20 countries. He had not taken the issue of children and armed conflict into consideration in the study in order to avoid duplication. The Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences could consider girls but not boys. There was no special mechanism under the Human Rights Council which addressed the issue of violence against children at home, in the schools and at the workplace. The problem was rather one of a gap in existing mechanisms for the protection of children. The main thrust of his mandate was to support effective follow-up to the recommendations of the study. The tasks ahead were very clearly defined, and the recommendations were in keeping with the spirit of reform of the United Nations. He noted that the Human Rights Council was currently undertaking a review of the mandates of the special mechanisms. Any further delays in implementing would therefore render the recommendations contained in the study less effective. He therefore appealed to Member States to act on the recommendations with a sense of urgency.

81. He had considered the specific situation of children and adolescents in occupied territories. The issue was not limited to children in situations of armed conflict. He hoped that the mandate of the proposed special representative would include persons under foreign occupation. *The World Report on Violence against Children* addressed the situation of unaccompanied, refugee and migrant children and highlighted the increasing exposure of children to violence in situations of conflict, crisis and foreign occupation, including the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

82. His mandate fell within the purview of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. In response to the question raised by the representative of Singapore, he referred to that Committee's General Comment No. 8 on the right of the child to protection from corporal punishment. His study was not a report on corporal punishment. He recognized the specific situation of each country and stressed the need for continued dialogue.

83. Child participation in efforts to promote the rights of children was essential. The study was original in that it sought to enable children to assume ownership of the recommendations contained in it. Member States must include children in decision-making processes, including the drafting of legislation. UNICEF had ensured the involvement of children and adolescents at all stages of the consultations held in preparation for the study. Children were citizens with rights; if they were recognized as such, their participation would be facilitated.

84. Concerning the question raised by the representative of Chile, while it was difficult to specify the exact levels and trends regarding violence against children, statistics had shown that child pornography in the electronic media and other crimes were increasing. Little was known about children in judicial institutions or children with mental disabilities, who were possibly the most neglected of all children. No mandate covered mentally and physically disabled children. As others had pointed out, poverty posed another serious risk of violence against children.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.